



Co-operative Councils

Innovation Network

CCIN innovation funding – 2018/9 Policy Labs

Would you like to collaborate with other CCIN Members (Councils, Associates and Affiliates) to find co-operative solutions to the challenges facing local government? Is there a co-operative idea that you would like to run in your local area? If yes, we want to hear from you!

As a CCIN member you can apply for up to £10,000 to deliver a Policy Lab. This could be anything from co-operative approaches to tackling food poverty to initiatives that put communities back at the heart of local decision making. We are open to all ideas, the more innovative the better!

So what do we need from you? If you have an idea, please complete the expression of interest form below, telling us about your idea for a Policy Lab. Don't be shy: we want to hear ideas from ALL our members.

Please return your completed EOI to comms@councils.coop

Expression of Interest – CCIN Funding

'Co-operative Approaches to Sustainable Food'

CCIN Member Authority: Oldham Council (on behalf of a partnership including Plymouth, Cardiff, Sandwell, Southampton, Greenwich)

Name of CCIN Lead Member: Cllr Martin Judd

Name and Job Title: Dominic Coleman – Principal Policy Officer (Strategy, Partnerships and Policy)

1. What is your idea?

- i) details of what your proposed project is:

The project aims to:

1. Transform the national debate among Co-operative Councils, regarding the ways to address food poverty and promote healthy eating and by providing information and materials to those councils which show how:
 - Policy Lab participant councils, and other CCIN members, are delivering successful initiatives – including how they can replicate similar initiatives.
 - Sustainable Food Cities initiatives (i.e. taking a whole food system approach) can be effective for all cooperative places – including how they can be replicated.
 - Self-sustaining multi-functional food hubs can be effective delivery partners.

The objective will be to show how Co-operative Councils can address their food poverty and healthy eating objectives (building on the Sustainable Food Cities principles) through local partnerships with sustainable local businesses (often, but not always, co-operatives or other social enterprises). It will also be to show how such initiatives can contribute to local job creation, food economy and improved health outcomes.

The project outputs will be:

- A video demonstrating the success of a plethora of initiatives taking place across the UK
- Presentations at the 2019 Cooperative Councils and Sustainable Food Cities events focussed around ‘Co-operative Approaches to Sustainable Food’
- A pdf summary with Case Studies for different Sustainable Food themes, showing how they can contribute to member council objectives.

ii) the story of how you identified the need or opportunity for the proposal:

There was an exploratory discussion at the Sustainable Food Cities (SFC) Annual Conference (26 June) between key leads about the potential of ‘Co-operative Approaches to Sustainable Food’. The need and opportunity for the proposal then strengthened during the CCIN Annual Conference (3 October) at the Sustainable Food Workshop. Those in attendance expressed an interest in learning more about SFC initiatives and co-operative approaches described by Cardiff, Oldham and Plymouth. We identified the opportunity by reflecting on the different activity in each area:

- Regarding food justice: Plymouth Council’s CATEREd programme addressing holiday hunger; Oldham Council’s community-led food network, Get Oldham Growing programme, and Green Dividend Fund, Cardiff’s focus on food poverty and healthy food including School Holiday Enrichment Programme
- Regarding multifunctional food hubs:
 - Plymouth: Food Plymouth’s proposed farm, urban and marine hubs; CATEREd commercial catering;
 - Greenwich: Greenwich Community Development Agency’s hub now in its 10th year. Among other things, this hub shows a route to

sustainability based on maximises the time its physical assets are used each day; it now earns 95% of its income through trading. It also has a strong public health team partnership, and helps support new food start-ups through its pop-up restaurants

- Sandwell (through the Jubilee Food Network): co-operating to redistribute surplus food, and reducing food poverty

iii) and how the money will be spent.

This application is for £10,000 to deliver the following:

a. **Research and active workshops**

Using a variety of options to explore and understand co-operative approaches to sustainable food across:

- **UK** – the primary focus (90%)

Working across the CCIN and SFC combined network (70+ areas) a number of different ‘focus groups/interactive workshops’ would be hosted across the UK (min. 4), with members invited to host specific sessions e.g. Plymouth, Cardiff, Oldham, Greenwich, Southampton, Sandwell etc. This would cover food themes e.g.; Food Poverty, Food Economy, Healthy Food etc.

- **Internationally** – the potential focus (10%)

The opportunity to benefit the wider CCIN network through learning and knowledge exchange visits to explore international approaches to sustainable food (e.g. with existing contacts in Emilia-Romagna, Italy, a leading region known for both (i) a rich history of co-operatives and (ii) a strong sustainable food agenda). Oldham is working with food/government leads in the region as part of an EU funding project.

b. **Video**

Producing a range of different tools and engaging products across the CCIN/SFC combined network to highlight co-operative approaches to sustainable food.

c. **Event presentations**

Presenting at two leading national conferences to cross-promote the findings to network members from 70+ local authority areas.

d. **PDF**

Bringing together the findings in a single document as a policy tool to inform and influence local, regional, national and international policy platforms.

This will include costs associated for; officer time, facilitation, commission, travel, workshop costs, production of materials etc. A number of local areas have already offered to host a session and contribute matched funding towards these costs.

2. Who will you work with?

*A key requirement of Policy Lab Funding is that you work in partnership with other CCIN members. We recommend engaging a minimum of **three** other CCIN members (Affiliates and Associates should bid alongside Full Council members) to create a working group to support the development of your project.*

At this current stage we have identified 6 active areas interested in taking part and envisage that a wider list of members would benefit and want to be involved and engaged.

- Full council members: Oldham, Cardiff, Greenwich, Plymouth, Sandwell, Southampton
- Affiliate partners: Sustainable Food Cities Network; Food Plymouth; Jubilee Food Network (Sandwell)

3. What are the outcomes you hope to achieve?

What are the outcomes you hope to achieve through this project and how will you know if your outcomes are achieved? What is your measure of success?

Outcome	Success measure
1. Detailed information made available to councils allowing them to make an informed judgment regarding the benefits and challenges of different food initiatives, and their suitability to local needs.	PDF produced and disseminated providing clear information regarding the nature, beneficiary groups, advantages, disadvantages, cost and sustainability of each initiative, and its suitability to urban and rural locations.
2. Co-operative Councils (23+ members) aware of the resources produced, and enthused to investigate the food justice initiatives described in them.	Presentation at the CCIN 2019 event, with project-specific feedback form. The PDF and link to videos sent to all CCIN member leads.
3. Sustainable Food Cities Network (55+ members) aware of the benefits of co-operative approaches to different sustainable food priorities.	Presentation at the SFC Conference, with project specific feedback form. The PDF and link to videos sent to all CCIN member leads.
4. Inform and influence key policy drivers through co-operative approaches to sustainable food	Referenced by publications/blogs/news articles both locally/nationally/internationally to promote findings and best practice
5. Exploration of how the SFC food partnerships amongst CCIN members provide a model for other CCIN members could better engage with food	Min. 4 sessions across the UK covering different food themes. Collection of case studies reflecting the full range of food social enterprise and cooperative models already developed by CIIN/SFC members.
6. Strengthen relationships between councils and cross-sector partners focussed on food.	Encourage a cross sector representation at all events from local authorities and wider partnerships.
7. (Potential) international collaboration across co-operative approaches to sustainable food and increased connections, benefits and relationships beyond the UK (e.g. with Emilia-Romagna)	Learning exchange between leading UK approaches and wider international approaches to co-operation and sustainable food.

4. How does your project support the aims and objectives of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network?

A recurrent theme at this year's CCIN Annual Conference was the key role that food can play as a vehicle for both cooperative action and cooperative enterprise at a city level. With Councils within and beyond the CCIN facing serious common food-related challenges - from the scandal of food poverty and the burgeoning epidemic of diet-related ill-health to the hollowing out of our high streets and degradation of the local and global environment - it is clear that concerted, collaborative action is needed both within and between cities if we are to address the huge food-related inequality and injustice that many individuals and communities face. A handful of CCIN members are already blazing a trail in this arena and this policy lab proposal has immense potential to widen, expand and deepen the understanding and awareness of co-operative approaches to sustainable food.

Framing the debate on the future of sustainable solutions also address public sector challenges: This links to the 'Post Peak State' economy and society, in which the level of Local Government spending will never again reach the levels of 2008 – 10. And ultimately improving outcomes for communities by enabling members to develop radical innovation in policy and practice, sharing best practice and learning, and enabling innovators to chart new territory together.

5. How does your project demonstrate the Values and Principles of the Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network?

Our Network is based on the Co-operative values developed by the International Co-operative Alliance: "self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity... honesty, openness, social responsibility and caring for others". Further details about the CCIN's Values and Principles is available [here](#). Please provide details of how your project will demonstrate the CCIN's Values and Principles.

Over a third of CCIN full and affiliate members are members of the Sustainable Food Cities Network and recognise the key importance of working, in a cross-sectoral collaborative way, on food - both to fulfil their cooperative ethos through establishing local food partnerships and to support cooperative enterprise through a wide range of innovative food social enterprise models and cooperative models, from cooperative supply initiatives (Tamar Grow Local), cooperative procurement (Preston Model), cooperative public sector social food provision (CATERed), social food hubs (Toxteth plus many others) and cooperative social food focused community assets (like those run by Greenwich Cooperative Development Agency).

The value of our proposal will also accelerate the switch away from remote outsourcing to more localised insourcing - emphasising the role of local cooperatives in enabling this. Broadly, the thrust of SFC and these two aspects of food related work by CCIN members is about promoting food justice (tackling food poverty, access and affordability), building social capital related to food (both community skills and assets) and promoting inclusive growth (local jobs, prosperity and fair wages through good food business). Which also supports some of the key values and principles upon which the Network is based (self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality). Through our partnership approach we will provide an opportunity for both networks to fully explore the potential of co-operative approaches to sustainable food, whilst developing further the understanding of food in the context of equality and self-responsibility.

6. How will you share your learning with the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network?

How will you share your learning with other CCIN members? How will you share your learning beyond the project? This could be through producing a report, holding a workshop or presenting at the CCIN's annual showcase event.

The project will provide opportunities for existing (70+) and interested (i) CCIN members and (ii) Sustainable Food Cities members to attend, engage and inform policy-workshops around co-operative approaches to sustainable food.

In addition we will:

1. Produce a video highlighting successful initiatives and describing how they could contribute to food justice
2. Present at the CCIN annual showcase and at the Sustainable Food Cities events (accessing a national membership of 70+ local authority areas)
3. Produce a pdf summarising the initiatives, and send it, with a link to the video, to all members for dissemination.

Additionally we have identified contributory funding through Sustainable Food Cities and local food partnership programmes (e.g. Oldham) to provide an element of matched funding for the Policy Lab.
